

Devotional and Selections

THE LIFE'S AIM.

By William Thomas McElroy, Jr.

The sweetest songs come not from the throats
Of those who are known to fame,
For over and over the wild bird's notes
Will put them all to shame.

The tenderest heart is not the heart
That makes the greatest show,
But the one that comes in the hour of grief,
And helps to bear the blow.

The greatest life is never the one
That of wondrous acts can boast,
But the life that sweetens some other life
And supplies its needs the most.

And the life most needed is not the one
That climbs to the mightier deeds,
But the one that helps another on,
And gives it the love it needs.

And so our prayer is not for a share
Of the things the world calls great,
But the power to help some brother on
To a higher and happier state.
Louisville, Ky.

GOOD DAYS.

Why do we not have more good days? Why are so many of our days clouded, depressing, discouraging? "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?" Because we try to make our days glad and happy by means which can never be successful. We are looking to outward conditions, material possessions, animal gratifications, and worldly luxury. These things will never make a heaven on earth. They are all apples of Sodom which will turn to smoke and ashes in our grasp. Good days are easily accessible without the slightest change in our earthly condition.

Sometimes nature gives us a fine day. The sun shines clear and the air is balmy. Men and women say, "This is glorious weather. If every day were like this life would be worth living." But we are not wise. If every day were a perfect day we should soon become weary of the monotony, and sigh for the wings of a dove to fly away to some clime of frost, and snow and rain that life might have needed variety.

Many readers of good literature remember the story of Rasselas, written long ago by Dr. Samuel Johnson. Rasselas was a prince of Abyssinia who lived in a beautiful valley called Happiness. Notwithstanding the valley was beautiful and the conditions favorable for those who longed for happiness, the prince became restless, and longed to go abroad in search of something different. In spite of the remonstrances of his friends Rasselas took his sister and set out in search of happiness, which would fully satisfy his mind. Through many lands he wandered, visiting many cities, everywhere inquiring for the happy people, but everywhere meeting the same spirit of restlessness and discontent. At last he said to his sister, "Let us go back to our own home in the valley of Happiness, for there is nothing better under the sun."

We are slow to learn this lesson. There is no better place than this. Good days are here, but they may not be good for us. The heavenly atmosphere, the heavenly sunshine, the heavenly glory, the heavenly experience are quite as accessible here as they are anywhere on earth or in heaven. God is here. The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Whatever your calling, whatever your lot, every day will be a good day if your heart is right with God. Neither poverty, nor sickness nor pain, nor toil can hinder the glory of God from shining on your path and illuminating your soul. Only sin can do this. Let sin be cast out, and let the Lord of glory in, and the kingdom is yours. It is in the atmosphere of a pure heart that we shall see good days.—Southern Churchman.

PEACE, PERFECT PEACE.

Peace, yea, perfect peace! What a heaven lies within! All gleaming with a heavenly light even in the midnight of this world of care! We cannot enjoy true peace as long as sin remains upon the conscience. As well might the ocean be quiet while the tempest is raging, or the sea bird rest on the wave when the storm is mixing earth and sky. The more the conscience is enlightened, the more surely will it forbid peace so long as sin remains, for its honest verdict is that sin deserves God's wrath, and must be punished. Every upright understanding assents to the justice of that dispensation by which "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." To me, when convinced of sin, it seemed that God could not be God if he did not punish me for my sins. Because of this deep-seated conviction, that great Gospel truth, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," became a heavenly message sweeter than the music of angels' harps. Then I saw, with glad surprise, that God in Christ Jesus is "just, and the justifier of him that believeth." To me the glorious doctrine of substitution was a well in a desert; and it is so still. I believe it with my whole soul. An honest man, if he be in debt, will always be in trouble until the liability is removed; but when his debt is paid, he leaps into liberty and gladness. When I learned that my enormous debt of sin had been fully discharged by the Lord Jesus Christ, who did this for all believers, then was my heart at peace.—C. H. Spurgeon.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER.

Jehovah, the loving God, distinctly promises to answer the prayers of his children. He that gave parents a love for their children, will he not listen to the cries of his own sons and daughters? He has wonders in store for them. What they never heard of, never saw, or dreamed of, he will do for them. He will invent new blessings, if needful. He will ransack sea and land to feed them; he will send every angel out of heaven to succor them, if their distress requires it. He will astound them with his grace, and make them feel that it was never before done in this fashion. All he asks of them is that they call upon him.—Spurgeon.

Remember, you have not a faculty of body, mind or soul whose law of improvement is not energy.